

**AFFIDAVIT OF CHARLES RICKIE FELDER**

**STATE OF MISSISSIPPI**

**COUNTY OF HINDS**

Personally came and appeared before me, the undersigned authority in and for the said County and State, within my jurisdiction, the within named Charles Rickie Felder, who, having been duly sworn by me, states on oath the following:

1. My name is Charles Rickie Felder and I am over 21 years of age. I am of sound mind and I am competent to testify as to the matters set forth in this affidavit.

2. I am the Director of the Mississippi Department of Human Services ("MDHS"), Division of Children and Family Services ("DFCS").

3. I conducted a detailed assessment of DFCS. The result was the development of a "Draft Plan" that sets forth goals and strategies for improving the operations of MDHS DFCS and services to the children and families the agency serves.

4. We are continuing to work toward hiring a consultant to develop the details of the "Draft Plan" so that it can be analyzed from a budget standpoint in order to obtain legislative support and funding.

5. After studying possible candidates for the consultant position I made the recommendation to hire American Public Human Services Association ("APHSA"). The agreement with APHSA is going through the state's administrative review process for final approval. I anticipate that approval will be granted and APHSA will commence work with on-site coordinators at MDHS beginning July 1, 2006.

6. Using my assessments set forth in the "Draft Plan" as a starting point, APHSA is to:



- conduct a strategic planning process to develop an agenda for identifying issues and goals to improve MDHS operations and services to children and families;
- provide an organizational assessment to evaluate MDHS's capacity and what is needed to fully implement the strategic plan as it relates to, among other things, funding, staffing, provision of direct services, and data collection;
- develop a timeline for completion of all aspects of the plan;
- develop individual staff charters and task plans, and
- continue to provide on-site support during the implementation phase of the plan.

7. As a result of an agreement finalized between MDHS and the University of Southern Mississippi earlier this month, the USM School of Social Work now has an on-site training academy at the Forrest County DFCS. This project includes development of a training curriculum as well as on-site training and supervision of the Forrest County DFCS staff. Some of the other major goals of the project are:

- increase in documentation being entered into MACWIS and improvement in the accuracy of data contained in MACWIS;
- a reduction in the number of placement moves experienced by foster children;
- increase in diligent search for relative placements;
- increase in the number of sibling groups remaining intact despite foster care placement;
- improvement in face to face contacts between direct service workers and foster children;
- reduction in the number of overdue Individualized Services Plans (ISPs);
- improvement in the number of children placed in close proximity to their birth parents;
- an increase in the number of family team meetings held;
- an increase in the number of foster/adoptive home recruitment activities, and

- a reduction in the number of children in agency custody.

8. The ultimate goal of this training academy is to improve the caliber of social workers and improve outcomes for the children and families. The training model developed by USM, may eventually be utilized state wide.

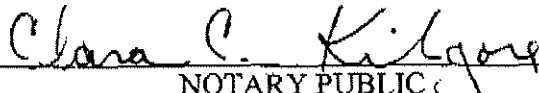
9. The matters set forth herein are based on my own personal knowledge of such matters, and of my review of records kept in the ordinary course of business.

10. I declare under penalty of perjury that the forgoing is true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief.

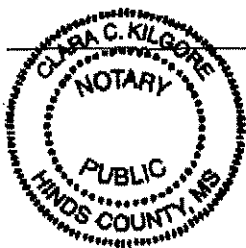
FURTHER AFFLIANT SAYETH NOT, this the 26 day of May, 2006.

  
CHARLES RICKIE FELDER

SWORN TO AND SUBSCRIBED BEFORE ME, this the 26 day of May, 2006.

  
NOTARY PUBLIC

My Commission Expires:



Notary Public State of Mississippi  
At Large  
My Commission Expires  
December 12, 2009  
BONDED THRU  
HEIDEN, BROOKS & GARLAND, INC.